

STATE OF VERMONT  
VERMONT PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD

Attachment to PSB Docket  
No. 7619 7/19/2011 Order

Docket No. 7619

Petition of National Mobile )  
Communication Corp., d/b/a Sovernet )  
Communications, for designation as an )  
Eligible Telecommunications Carrier in )  
areas served by non-rural telephone )  
Companies under the Telecommunications )  
Act of 1996 )

**PROTECTIVE AGREEMENT**

THIS AGREEMENT is dated as of June \_\_\_, 2011 and is by and among National Mobile Communications Corp., d/b/a Sovernet ("Sovernet" or the "Company") and the State of Vermont Department of Public Service (the "Department" or "DPS") and certain other below-signed parties, the names of which are set forth on the signature pages and approved schedules to this Agreement, (the DPS, and each other party will be sometimes referenced herein, where the context requires, as a "Party" and collectively as the "Parties");

WHEREAS, the Parties desire to cooperate in the provision of information relevant to the compliance filings in the above-captioned docket before the Vermont Public Service Board ("Board") regarding the Board's approval of Sovernet's Petition for Approval as Eligible Telecommunications Carrier ("ETC") under 47 U.S.C. Section 214(e) with a service area consisting of wire centers within Vermont.

WHEREAS, Sovernet has information pertinent to the above-captioned docket that it has filed as part of its compliance filing, which Sovernet believes could result in financial and/or competitive harm to it or to others if it is required to disclose such information to the public, and which information Sovernet believes to be proprietary, privileged, confidential or in the nature of a trade secret (which information is referenced herein as "Allegedly Confidential Information" and is specifically described on Schedule I hereto. which Schedule may be amended only in

accordance with the terms of this Agreement);

WHEREAS, Sovernet desires to disclose Allegedly Confidential Information only to Parties that have executed Schedule IIa or Schedule IIb. as appropriate, to this Agreement or, in certain situations, only to the Board or to the Department for review in accordance with this Agreement; and

WHEREAS, the Parties have agreed to the procedures established in this Agreement for the disclosure of Allegedly Confidential Information to the Parties, including the Department, and/or the Board and to provisions for holding such Allegedly Confidential Information in confidence;

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual covenants and promises set forth herein and other good and valuable consideration, the receipt and sufficiency of which is hereby acknowledged, the Parties hereto agree as follows:

1. If Sovernet seeks to place information under this protective agreement, it shall file an averment, as described in paragraph 2 of the protective order, which is attached as Schedule IV to this Agreement, with the Department. If the Department agrees to treat specific information to be provided by Sovernet in the above-captioned docket as Allegedly Confidential Information, Sovernet will submit to the Board and all Parties a copy of Schedule I, as from time to time revised in accordance with the terms of this Agreement, identifying each such item of Allegedly Confidential Information and signed or initialed by the Department to evidence its agreement to treat such item as Allegedly Confidential Information. This Agreement applies only to that information that Sovernet and the Department agree will be treated as Allegedly Confidential Information listed on Schedule I. Each Schedule I may be amended only by agreement of Sovernet and the Department. Upon agreement of the Department to Schedule I or an amendment thereto, the party seeking to place information

under this protective agreement shall file the same averment, previously filed with the Department, with the Board as required by the protective order which is attached as Schedule IV to this agreement<sup>1</sup>. If the Department does not agree to treat specific information to be provided by Sovernet as Allegedly Confidential Information, Sovernet may request a hearing before the Board by seeking a protective order as provided under V.R.C.P. 26(c). Sovernet shall file its request in writing with the Board and Parties within seven (7) business days of its receipt of a denial by the Department that such information can be treated as Allegedly Confidential Information under this Agreement. During the seven-day period, the information shall be treated as Allegedly Confidential Information under this Agreement. If Sovernet files a timely request with the Board and the Parties, the information shall be treated in accord with Paragraph 14 of this Agreement.

2. The Department may obtain Allegedly Confidential Information by submitting to Sovernet's counsel the Schedule IIa attached hereto, which incorporates by reference this Protective Agreement. If such a request is made for Allegedly Confidential Information, Sovernet, through its respective counsel, will provide one copy of its Allegedly Confidential Information to the Department or otherwise make such Allegedly Confidential Information available. The Department will afford access to the Allegedly Confidential Information only to its employees and consultants who have executed Schedule IIa and returned the executed Schedule IIa to Sovernet's counsel. The Department shall make only one copy of any Allegedly Confidential Information for each individual who has executed Schedule IIa, except as otherwise provided in Paragraph 4 hereof.

3. A Party other than the Department may obtain Allegedly Confidential Information by submitting to Sovernet's counsel, the Protective Agreement and Schedule IIb and Schedule III attached thereto. If such a request is made for Allegedly Confidential

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<sup>1</sup> Pursuant to Paragraph 4 of the Proposed Order (Schedule IV), under letter dated June 14, 2011, Sovernet filed an envelope containing two documents (See Schedule I) as allegedly confidential information.

Information, Sovernet, through its counsel, will provide one copy of the Allegedly Confidential Information to such Party, or otherwise will make such Allegedly Confidential Information available to such Party, except those documents or portions thereof excised based on legal objection and duly noted by counsel for Sovernet including, but not limited to, objections based on relevance, privilege, or requires disclosure of confidential commercial information or trade secrets. Each such Party will afford access to the Allegedly Confidential Information only to such employees, consultants and other representatives who have executed Schedule IIb and are named in Schedule III to this Agreement and returned the executed Schedules IIb and III to Sovernet's counsel. A Party shall make only one copy of any Allegedly Confidential Information for each individual who has executed Schedule IIb, except as otherwise provided in Paragraph 4 hereof.

4. Documents containing or incorporating Allegedly Confidential Information to be offered in evidence under seal may be copied as necessary for that purpose. The Parties' counsel, personnel and consultants, who have agreed in writing to be bound by this Agreement, may take notes regarding such Allegedly Confidential Information, but only as necessary for review of the compliance filing and preparation for any further proceedings in the above-captioned docket. Such notes shall be treated the same as the Allegedly Confidential Information from which the notes were taken and shall not be used for any purpose other than as specified herein.

5. No Party that has executed this Agreement, and no person representing such Party, that is afforded access to the Allegedly Confidential Information shall use the Allegedly Confidential Information for any purpose other than the purpose of preparation for and conduct of this Docket, including appeals of any order or ruling therein, and then solely as contemplated herein. Each such Party, and each such representative person, shall keep the Allegedly Confidential Information secure and shall not disclose it or afford access to it to any

person not authorized by this Agreement to receive same. Nothing in this Agreement precludes the Department from using Allegedly Confidential Information obtained hereunder either to seek a Board investigation (provided that the Department continues to treat such Allegedly Confidential Information as confidential pursuant to the protective terms of this Agreement) or request that the Allegedly Confidential Information or similar information be provided by Sovernet in any other context.

6. Should the Department or any other Party receive any subpoena, or any request pursuant to any Vermont law regarding access to public records, for any document or information received from Sovernet pursuant to this Agreement, the Department or such other Party promptly shall notify the counsel or other representative of Sovernet of the pendency of such subpoena or other request, and shall abide by the terms and conditions of this Agreement unless and until ordered otherwise by a court or administrative body of competent jurisdiction. Nothing in this Agreement shall limit or waive in any manner any rights that Sovernet may have under applicable law to seek protection against disclosure pursuant to a subpoena, a request for access to public records, or any other request for information.

7. If a Party wishes to file any correspondence, testimony, exhibits or other documentation ("documentation") that includes or otherwise discloses Allegedly Confidential Information supplied pursuant to this Agreement, that Party must give five-business days' advance notice to counsel for tSovernet. Any Party may move the Board for an order that the documentation be filed under seal or under other conditions to prevent unnecessary disclosure.

a. If such motion is filed within the five-business day advance notice period, the proponent of the documentation shall place them in a sealed record by filing such documents in sealed envelopes or other appropriate sealed containers on which shall be endorsed the caption and docket number of the proceeding, the nature of the contents (exhibit, report, etc.) and a

statement that it shall not be opened or released from custody of the Clerk of the Board, except by Order of the Board or Hearing Officer. Notwithstanding such a statement the members of the Board, and any employee or consultant specifically authorized by the Board to assist the Board in this proceeding and any Hearing Officer appointed to this Docket, may have access to such sealed Allegedly Confidential Information, but shall not disclose the contents of any such sealed information to any person who has not agreed to be bound by the Protective Agreement. The Board or Hearing Officer will then determine whether the proffered documentation should continue to be treated as confidential information and, if so, what protection, if any, may be afforded to such information.

b. If no such motion is filed by the end of the five-business day advance notice period, the documentation may be filed as a document available for public access.

8. At any hearing or conference in this proceeding, no witness may be questioned with respect to any Allegedly Confidential Information, unless examining counsel has provided advance notice to counsel for Sovernet. To the extent possible, such notice shall be given prior to the commencement of the hearing or conference. Any party may move the Board for an order that the documentation, including any testimony be received in camera or under other conditions to prevent unnecessary disclosure. If such motion is made, the Board or Hearing Officer will then determine whether the documentation should be received in camera or subject to other protection.

9. Sovernet may make written requests to the Department or other Party for the return of Allegedly Confidential Information. Such requests shall be made within sixty (60) days after final decision, order or judgment in this docket, unless appeal from such decision, order or judgment is taken, in which case the request shall be made within sixty (60) days after the conclusion of the appeal and any remand or further appeal therefrom. Within sixty (60)

days of such a request by Sovernet, the Department or other Party shall: (a) return the Allegedly Confidential Information supplied by Sovernet to its counsel, except for those portions of the Allegedly Confidential Information which have been made public; (b) cause its employees and consultants to destroy any notes taken concerning, or any documents or information in any form incorporating, Allegedly Confidential Information which has not been made public, and (c) advise Sovernet in writing that the requirements of this paragraph have been met. Notwithstanding the foregoing, nothing in this paragraph shall require the Department to destroy notes, documents, or information in violation of statute.

10. No signatory hereto shall assign to any other person its rights or obligations hereunder, and any such assignment by any signatory of the rights and obligations hereunder shall be null and void.

11. An individual's access to Allegedly Confidential Information ceases upon termination of employment with a Party, and any individual who terminates employment with a Party who has executed this Agreement or Schedule IIa or Schedule IIb shall continue to be bound by its terms.

12. This Agreement is made under and shall be governed by the laws of the State of Vermont.

13. This Agreement shall in no way be deemed to constitute any waiver of the rights of any Party to the above-captioned docket. The foregoing provisions of this Agreement notwithstanding, any Party to the above-captioned docket may at any time, to the full extent allowable by applicable law, contest any assertion or appeal any finding that specific information is or should be Allegedly Confidential Information or that it should or should not be subject to the protective requirements of this Agreement. The Parties hereto retain the right to question, challenge and object to the submission or admissibility of any and all Allegedly

Confidential Information furnished by Sovernet under this Agreement on any available grounds, including, but not limited to, competency, relevancy and materiality. Any Party may at any time seek by appropriate pleading to have Allegedly Confidential Information submitted under this Agreement, or under protective order issued by the Board or Hearing Officer pursuant to this Agreement, removed from the coverage of this Agreement or the order.

14. In the event that the Board or a Hearing Officer in the above-captioned docket should rule that any information is not appropriate for inclusion in a sealed record, or should be disclosed to a Party where Sovernet objects to such disclosure under Paragraph 3 of this Agreement, the Parties agree that, at the request or upon the motion of Sovernet seeking protection of such information from disclosure, such information will not be disclosed until the later of five business days after the Board or Hearing Officer so orders, or, if Sovernet files an interlocutory appeal or requests a stay of such order, the date upon which such appeal or request is decided; provided, however, that such period of time may be extended in accordance with any stay ordered by the Board or a reviewing court.

15. The Parties promptly will submit to the Board a proposed Protective Order in the form attached hereto as Schedule IV that, if adopted, will set forth the procedure for treating Allegedly Confidential Information in a sealed record.

16. Each Party warrants that it will act in good faith and will not do anything to deprive any other Party of the benefit of this Agreement.

17. This Agreement may be amended or modified only by a written document signed by the Parties hereto.

18. The Parties have entered into this Agreement to expedite the production of information, minimize the time spent in disputes, and facilitate the progress of this compliance



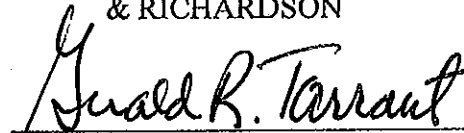
filing to the fullest extent possible. Entry into this Agreement shall not be construed as an admission by any Party regarding the scope of the Party's statutory right to information, nor shall it be construed as a waiver of the right to raise any and all appropriate confidentiality issues in future dockets.

19. Information that is designated by Sovernet as Allegedly Confidential Information pursuant to this Agreement that a Party also obtains independent of this Agreement is not subject to this Agreement.

20. Sovernet shall not seek the disqualification of any Department employee, consultant, or other representative as to any authorized Department activity on the grounds that such person reviewed information provided hereunder. Dated at Montpelier, Vermont, this 14<sup>th</sup> day of June 2011.

TARRANT, GILLIES, MERRIMAN  
& RICHARDSON

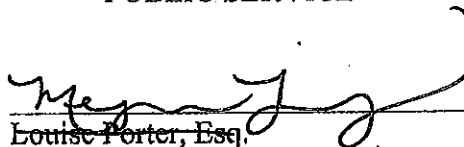
By:



Gerald R. Tarrant, Esq.  
Attorney for Petitioner  
P.O. Box 1440  
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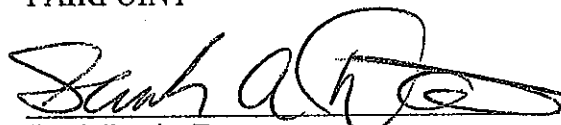
VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF  
PUBLIC SERVICE

By:



Louise Porter, Esq.  
Megan Ludwig, Esq.  
FAIRPOINT

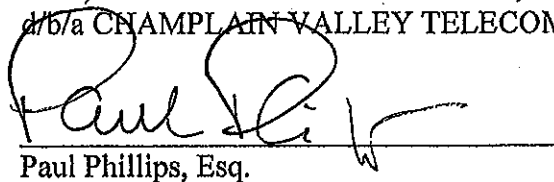
By:



Sarah Davis, Esq.

FRANKLIN TELEPHONE COMPANY,  
INC., LUDLOW TELEPHONE  
COMPANY, NORTHFIELD TELEPHONE  
CO., PERKINSVILLE TELEPHONE  
COMPANY, INC., SHOREHAM  
TELEPHONE COMPANY, INC.,  
TOPSHAM TELEPHONE COMPANY,  
INC., VERMONT TELEPHONE  
COMPANY, INC., WAITSFIELD-  
FAYSTON TELEPHONE COMPANY,  
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Paul Phillips, Esq.